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LETTER DATED 31 MARCH 1999 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to inform you that the OIC Contact Group on Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo held an urgent meeting at the ambassadorial level on 26 March 1999 to discuss the disturbing situation in Kosovo. The Contact Group adopted a statement on the situation in Kosovo, the text of which is contained in the annex to this letter.

It would be highly appreciated if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as an official document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Hadi NEJAD HOSSEINIAN
Ambassador
Permanent Representative
Chairman of the OIC Contact Group
on Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo

Annex

Statement of the OIC Contact Group on Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosova on the situation in Kosova

The Organization of the Islamic Conference Contact Group on Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosova, at its meeting held at the Ambassadorial level on 26 March 1999, expressed its deep regret over the failure of the peace effort to persuade the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) to accept a political solution to the issue of Kosova. Indeed, the international community has done its utmost for more than a year to find a peaceful solution to the Kosova conflict, as reflected, among others, in the letter dated 14 March 1999 from the Secretary-General of the OIC to the President of Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). The Contact Group noted that the efforts of international community, at least, brought about the signature of the Kosovar Albanian representatives. The Contact Group also recalled its position on the situation in Kosova as contained, in particular, in UN Security Council documents S/1998/923 dated 6 October 1998 and S/1999/76 dated 26 January 1999.

The Contact Group noted with grave concern that the Belgrade regime under President Milosevic not only has persistently refused to engage seriously in the search for a political solution but has conducted military operations and is continuing to do so against the civilian population in Kosova, forcing thousands and thousands out of their homes, burning entire villages, committing the crimes of genocide and ethnic cleansing, in contravention of the provisions of the relevant Security Council resolutions and international humanitarian law. The Contact Group took note of the fact that in view of the failure of all diplomatic efforts, due to the intransigence of the Belgrade authorities, a decisive international action was necessary to prevent humanitarian catastrophe and further violations of human rights in Kosova.

The OIC Contact Group on Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosova would have wished that the crisis in Kosova could be dealt with in an effective manner by the Security Council. It is regrettable that the Security Council has been unable to discharge its responsibility in this case in accordance with the United Nations Charter. The Contact Group reiterated that the Security Council has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and that in carrying out its duties under this responsibility the Security Council shall act on behalf of the Members of the United Nations.

The Contact Group expressed its serious concern about the fact that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) has unleashed its war machine against its own civilians, engaged, most recently, in military aggression against its neighbors, blatantly violated the provisions of international law and numerous Security Council resolutions and refuses to cooperate with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. The OIC Contact Group reiterates its position that the mandate of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia covers the crimes committed on the territory of Kosova and the Tribunal should bring those responsible for grave violation of international humanitarian law to justice.